The Cleveland Museum of Art

Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland Foundation Announce Creative Fusion: Composers Series

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Series will support the creation of six original works by international composers for the museum's performing arts series

Cleveland, OH (August 23, 2018) – A new performing arts initiative is bringing six exceptional and diverse composers from around the world to the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA), where they will draw inspiration for original compositions to be performed in Cleveland over the next two years. With generous support from the Cleveland Foundation [1] and its decade-long Creative Fusion program, the composers will immerse themselves in the city and the museum's encyclopedic collection.

"The Cleveland Museum of Art presents a year-round performing arts series, notable for its international reach, critical acclaim and adventurous spirit," said William Griswold, director of the CMA. "The Cleveland Foundation's Creative Fusion program offers the opportunity for exceptional composers to generate important new work. This initiative will advance the mission of the museum, reinforcing its stature as a leader among global arts institutions."

The six composers are Luciano Chessa, Cenk Ergün, Aya Nishina, Sophie Nzayisenga, Henry Threadgill and Aleksandra Vrebalov. Conversations with curators and potential collaborators from across the city's creative community, and close coordination with the museum's performing arts staff, will guide the process of creating the commissioned works. Three performances will premiere in spring 2019, and three will debut during the 2019–20 concert season.

"Creative Fusion is an international residency program unlike any other in the nation, and we're tremendously excited about this groundbreaking partnership with the Cleveland Museum of Art," said Ronn Richard, Cleveland Foundation president and CEO. "It will be wonderful to see and hear these renowned composers work with local musicians and arts institutions to create pieces that will debut here, then live on for the world to experience."

The CMA boasts a century-long commitment to world-class performing arts. Over the course of its first 100 years, the museum hosted many great composers, including Béla Bartók, Amy Beach, John Cage, Aaron Copland, Henry Cowell, Paul Hindemith, Olivier Messiaen, Pauline Oliveros, Maurice Ravel, Karlheinz Stockhausen and John Tavener. These extraordinary artists presented their music to museum audiences, giving the Cleveland community a rare opportunity to experience direct engagement with living composers. This legacy continues: contemporary composers who have presented their music at the museum include John Adams, John Luther Adams, Chen Yi, Mark Dresser, Fred Frith, Ellen Fullman, Philip Glass, Stephen Hartke, Vijay Iyer, Miya Masaoka, Camille Norment, Steve Reich, Bright Sheng, Carl Stone, Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ, Otomo Yoshihide and Zhou Long.

“This is an exciting moment in the history of the museum,” said Thomas M. Welsh, the CMA’s director of performing arts. “Embarking on a journey with these composers to bring major new works to life adds a dimension to both our legacy and our future. We are delighted by the Cleveland Foundation’s visionary support, and eagerly look forward to what these marvelous artists will do.”

Since 2008, Creative Fusion has brought to Cleveland more than 80 international artists-in-residence. Earlier this year, the Cleveland Foundation launched Creative Fusion: The Madison Residencies, which provides support for 18 local, national and international artists participating in FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art.

About the Composers

Luciano Chessa (Sardinia, b. 1971), a composer, conductor, and audiovisual and performance artist, has received commissions from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Performa Biennial. In 2014 he presented three events at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum as part of the exhibition *Italian Futurism, 1909–1944: Reconstructing the Universe*. A music historian specializing in 20th-century Italian and 21st-century American repertoire, Chessa is the author of *Luigi Russolo, Futurist: Noise, Visual Arts, and the Occult* (2012), the first monograph dedicated to Russolo and his “Art of Noise.” In 2009 the New York Times hailed Chessa’s Orchestra of Futurist Noise Intoners (OFNI) as one of the year’s best arts events. This fall, he will conduct the world premiere of Julius Eastman’s Second Symphony in New York.

Cenk Ergün (Turkish, b. 1978), is a composer and improviser whose work has been performed by So Percussion, JACK Quartet, Alarm Will Sound, Yarn/Wire and others at venues in New York, Amsterdam, Zurich and Istanbul. Ergün has participated in the NY Phil Biennial, Lincoln Center Festival, Gaudeamus Music Week, MATA Festival, Bang on a Can Marathon, WNYC’s New Sounds Live, Peak Performances at Montclair University, Stanford Lively Arts and San Francisco Electronic Music Festival.

Aya Nishina (Japan, b. 1982), composes concert music as well as soundscapes for film, site-specific installations and performance art. Born in Japan, Nishina traveled to Michigan at age 15 to study at Interlochen Arts Academy. She moved to New York City in 2001 and immediately joined Tzadik Records as the youngest composer ever to sign with the label. Since then, she has collaborated with mentors John Zorn and Ryuichi Sakamoto, as well as other highly creative, visionary artists.

Sophie Nzayisenga (Rwanda, b. 1978), is the first female master of the Rwandan traditional zither (inanga) and one of the leading East African players of the instrument. Nzayisenga has furthered the role of the inanga by performing with international ensembles in Malawi, the UK and Turkey. In 2016 she was one of 15 musicians from across Africa to participate in the Nile Project.

Henry Threadgill (USA, b. 1944), is one of only three jazz artists (joining Ornette Coleman and Wynton Marsalis) to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize, and the first black nonclassical musician to receive a Copland House Residency Award. After decades of creating probing music and achieving cult status and critical acclaim, Threadgill continues to garner high-culture recognition: Doris Duke Artist Award (2016), Doris Duke Impact Award (2015), United States Artist Fellowship (2008), Guggenheim Fellowship (2003).

Aleksandra Vrebalov (Serbia, b. 1970), has created more than 70 works, ranging from concert music and opera to music for modern dance and film. Her compositions have been performed by the Kronos Quartet, Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, Serbian National Theater, Belgrade Philharmonic, Providence Festival Ballet and other ensembles. Vrebalov's cross-disciplinary interests have led to residencies, fellowships and seminar participation at the MacDowell Colony, Djerassi, The Hermitage, New York's New Dramatists, Rockefeller Bellagio Center, American Opera Projects, Tanglewood, and Moral and Mythology in Contemporary Art (Novi Sad).

About the Cleveland Foundation

Established in 1914, the Cleveland Foundation is the world's first community foundation and one of the largest today, with assets of $2.45 billion and 2017 grants of more than $101 million. Through the generosity of donors, the foundation improves the lives of residents of Cuyahoga, Lake and Geauga Counties by building community endowment, addressing needs through grantmaking and providing leadership on vital issues. The foundation tackles the community's priority areas—education and youth development, neighborhoods, health and human services, arts and culture, and economic development—and responds to the community's needs. For more information, visit clevelandfoundation.org.

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About the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes more than 63,000 artworks and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and performing arts and is a leader in digital innovations. One of the top comprehensive art museums in the nation, recognized for its award-winning Open Access program and free of charge to all, the Cleveland Museum of Art is located in the University Circle neighborhood.

The museum is supported in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and made possible in part by the Ohio Arts Council (OAC), which receives support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts. The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically. For more information about the museum and its holdings, programs and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit cma.org [2].

Press Announcements [3]

Source URL: https://www.clevelandart.org/about/press/media-kit/cleveland-museum-art-cleveland-foundation-announce-creative-fusion-composers-series

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